

January 8, 1996

says, and this is an authorization of what the committee affirmatively may do rather than saying that the committee shall do everything except this. Okay, let me read it. "Committees shall consider and report without unnecessary delay all bills and resolutions referred to them." No problem with that at all. "Committees shall be authorized to combine and to correlate the provisions of different bills and resolutions." Now, if you're combining, that means you're taking two or more items and putting them together. If you're correlating, you're taking two or more items and putting them in a certain arrangement or order. Can we find within those two words the authorization to completely strip out material from one bill and offer the contents of another or something that may not have even been in another bill? Let me take it a step at a time. If this process is to occur, before getting to whether or not it's authorized under the language of the amendment, must the new material be before the committee in an existing bill? I think the answer to that is no.

SPEAKER WITHEM: I, I would say that that power comes from a more inherent power the committees have or that any legislator has or any member of any deliberative body has to propose amendments, to propose ideas through an amendment process.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: Okay, good, and that was clear to me, too, but again, I'm taking it step by step. Right now, what would prevent a committee from stripping the contents of one bill and offering the contents of others? Naturally this would be done as a committee amendment. What is there that would prevent that now?

SPEAKER WITHEM: The, oh...my concern is an overly strict interpretation of the existing language that is being here, stripped out here, might be used as an argument on the floor to prevent that idea from being considered as a committee amendment.

SENATOR CHAMBERS: So by stripping out that language which is being stricken, we now make the field open to give the flexibility to the committee to do the things we've discussed.

SPEAKER WITHEM: I think we make it clearer that what we, I think, have all accepted as the practice is, in fact, comports with our rules and we'd strip this language out of our rules